SIGHT,

THE CAVERN OF WOE,

AND

SOLITUDE.

POEMS

BY

Mrs. *MARY ROBINSON*,

AUTHOR OF POEMS, &c. AINSI VA LE MONDE, THE MONODY TO THE MEMORY OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, VANCENZA, &c. &c. &c.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. SPILSBURY AND SON, SNOW-HILL;

AND SOLD BY J. EVANS, NO. 32, PATERNOSTER-ROW; AND T. BECKET, PALL-MALL.

M.DCC.XCIII.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE.

[*ENTERED AT STATIONERS-HALL.*]

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

JOHN TAYLOR, Esq.

SIR,

YOUR acknowledged professional skill in the subject of the following POEM, would alone mark the propriety of inscribing it to you; had I not a still more powerful reason, for doing MYSELF that honour.

You will not accuse me of flattery, when I declare, that I feel infinite pleasure, in paying a just, though small tribute, to ONE whose friendship I am proud to enjoy, as proceeding from a penetrating and enlightened mind!

I am an enemy to DEDICATIONS in general, because they are too frequently calculated to feed the VANITY of HIGH RANK, or to serve as passports to the short-lived and degrading approbation of the IGNORANT. Yet, with an

unconquerable enthusiasm, I shall ever pay voluntary homage to the FIRST of all distinctions,—the ARISTOCRACY OF GENIUS!

With these sentiments, I have the honour of subscribing myself,

SIR,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

MARY ROBINSON.

St. James's Place,
June 21, 1793.

SIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO

JOHN TAYLOR, Esq.

O THOU! all wonderful, all glorious Pow'r!
That through the SOUL diffusest light sublime,
And bidst it see th' omnipotence of God!
O SIGHT! to MAN, the vivifying lamp,
That, darting through the intellectual maze,
Giv'st to each rising thought the living ray!
As the PROMETHEAN touch awoke THAT source
Whose glory warms the PLANETARY world;
So THE SUPREME illum'd the VISUAL ORB,
To mark his works, and wonder at his pow'r!

Transcendent gift! but for thy light divine,
Oh! what a CHAOS were the mind of MAN!
Compos'd of atoms, exquisitely fine,
Each moving in a dark obstructed sphere,
Forlorn, and undelighted! for to him
Whose eye ne'er drank the widely beaming ray,

What are the wonders of the starry worlds;
Creation's fair domain, its gems, its hues,
And all its bright diversity of charms?
What are his faculties, his passions, thoughts?
He labours through a wilderness obscure,
Each OTHER sense awaken'd, wanting ſtill
THAT SENSE DIVINE, which gives to each its charm;
The earth, to HIM, a ſolitary ſpeck,
For ever mournful, and for ever drear!

Oblivion horrible! to know no change;
Nor light from darkness! nor the human form,
The image of perfection infinite!
To faſhion various phantoms of the brain,
By each AMUS'D, and yet by each DECEIV'D!
To roll the aching eye, alas! in vain,
And ſtill to find a melancholy blank
Of years, and months, and days, and ling'ring hours,
All dark alike, eternally obſcure!
To ſuch a wretch! whoſe brighteſt hour of bliſs
Is but the ſhadow of a waking dream,
The ſleep of DEATH, with all its ſtartling fears,
Muſt teem with proſpects of ELYSIUM!
For what is *ſleep*, but temporary *death*;

Sealing up all the windows of the soul,
And binding ev'ry sense in torpid chains?
Yet, only for a time the spell controuls,
And soothing visions gild the transient gloom;
For every active faculty of mind
Springs from the numbing apathy of sleep
With renovated lustre and delight!
But HE who knows ONE unenlighten'd void,
ONE dreary night, unbless'd with cheerful dreams,
Lives in the midst of Death; and, when he sleeps,
Feeds a perpetual solitude of woe,
Without one ray to dissipate its gloom.

Then what to him avails the varying year,
The orient morn, or evening's purple shade,
That robes Creation in a garb of rest?
WHAT all the beauties of the vast expanse,
The tint cerulean, or the vaulted arch
Of Heaven's eternal dome! Can FANCY paint,
With all the vivid magic of her pow'r,
The spangling legions of the sphery plains;
The gaudy-vested SUMMER's saffron glow,
When proudly gilded by its parent SUN,
As through the flaming Heav'ns his dazzling car,

Burnish'd with sparkling light, sheds liquid gold
O'er seas ethereal; while the breezes stay
To kiss the fainting flow'rs, whose silky heads
Inclining, fade beneath their with'ring touch?
Can FANCY give the rainbow's lustre pure
To the cold vacuum of the sightless eye?
Insensible to colours, space, or form,
Stumbling and fearful, through a desart shade,
MAN gropes forlorn, and lab'ring like the MOLE;
He feels the vivifying glow divine,
But, 'midst the blaze of radiance infinite,
An isolated being, wanders still,
Sad, unillum'd, disconsolate, and lost!

Nor yet alone the misery extreme
Of the dread gloom opake involves his mind;
The longing for that SOMETHING yet unknown,
Whose pow'r he feels, diffusing its warm touch
O'er ev'ry sensate nerve! that POW'R which marks
The varying seasons in their varying forms,
That tells him there is YET a sense untry'd,
Ungratified, yet fraught with heavenly bliss,
Distracts beyond the certitude of pain,

Chills the expanding source of mental joy,
And deadens all the faculties of man!

Ah! woe too exquisite for human thought!
Of mortal miseries, the DREAD SUPREME!
How can the soul its energies sustain,
When REASON's chrystal gates are clos'd in night,
And cold Oblivion hovers o'er the mind?
What are the horrors of the dungeon's gloom,
The bolts of steel, or the flint-fretted roof,
The temporary spells, that shut the wretch
From the bland glories of effulgent day?
While HOPE comes smiling on the wings of TIME,
And the small crevice in his loathsome cell,
That promises a glimm'ring stream of light,
Bids him look forward to the coming joy!
What are the self-created, anxious fears,
That, thronging round the midnight traveller,
Give to his straining eye, fantastic forms,
And fill imagination's boundless scope
With shad'wy hosts, scaring his startled mind;
While Silence reigns despotic o'er the plain;
Save where the BIRD OF SOLITUDE salutes
The melancholy hour, and pours alone,

Her love-bewailing song; yet HOPE beguiles,
Nor quits him as he strays, 'till the wan MOON,
Peering in silv'ry panoply of light,
Sails placidly sublime through the still air,
And scatters round her imitative day!
But the unvarying cloud of deepest night!
The blank *perpetual* of the sightless orb!
The mournful CHAOS of the darken'd brain!
NO HOPE can animate, no THOUGHT illume;
ALL is eternal solitude profound;
A dreadful SHADE, that mocks each other sense,
And plunges Reason in its WORST ABYSS!

And yet, in such a mind, so whelm'd in gloom,
The pure affections of the soul still live!
The melancholy void is subject still
To the sweet magic of seraphic sounds;
The soothing eloquence of sacred song;
The whisp'ring gale, that mourns declining day;
Or Philomela's soul-subduing strain,
That wooes lone Echo, from her viewless seat,
To sail aërial-thron'd upon the breeze!
The lulling murmurs of the wand'ring stream;
The ever rippling rill; the cataract fierce;

The lowing herds; and the small drowsy tones,
That, from the insect myriads, hum around;
The love-taught minstrelsy of plumed throats;
The dulcet strains of gentle Consolation!
But most of all, to THAT LOV'D VOICE, whose thrill
Rushing impetuous through each throbbing vein,
Dilates the wond'ring mind, and frees its pow'rs
From the cold chains of icy apathy,
To all the vast extremes of bliss and pain!
For, to THAT VOICE ADOR'D, his quiv'ring pulse
Responsive beats! he marks its *ev'ry* tone,
And finds in *each* a sympathetic balm!
Ill-fated wretch! HE knows not the sweet *sense*
That feeds upon the magic of a smile!
That drinks the poison of the murd'rous eye,
Or ruſhes, in an extacy of bliss,
To snatch the living roses from the cheek!
HE knows not what it is to trace each charm,
That plays about the symmetry of form,
And heightens ev'ry timid blushing grace,
More lovely, from the wonder it commands!
He never mark'd the soul-expresssive tear!
The undeſcribable and speaking glance,

That promises unutterable bliss!
Then what to HIM avails the ruby lip,
Or the rich luſtre of the silky waves,
That half conceal the azure-tinctur'd eye,
As golden clouds rush on the morning star,
And glow, exulting, o'er its milder ray!

O glorious SIGHT! sublimest gift of God!
Expansive source of intellectual bliss!
By thee we climb to immortality,
Through all the rugged paths of tedious life!
THY nerve ſhoots forth a light ineffable,
That marks the fount of SCIENCE, and reveals
The many-winding paths of WISDOM's maze!
Thou canst within thy narrow vortex grasp
The outstretch'd OCEAN, and the LANDSCAPE wide,
Diversified with craggy cliffs, whose heads
Hang fearfully sublime, half veil'd in clouds,
O'er the low valley's solitary breast!
'Tis thine, upon the mountain's dizzy edge
To ponder on the wonders of the SKY!
Or bending o'er the margin, trace below,
The world of mingling atoms, less'ning still
As the dread cavity grows more profound;

Till woods, and lakes, and scatter'd villages,
And stately palaces, and lofty spires,
Fade in the deep impenetrable gloom!
THOU canst avert the storm that gathers round,
And bids thee seek the hospitable roof
Where meek PHILANTHROPY unfolds her store!
'TIS THINE to contemplate the gorgeous SUN
In all its majesty of living light,
Flaming, despotic, o'er unnumber'd WORLDS!
'TIS THINE to mark the snowy-vested plains,
That, like the glitt'ring stores of Avarice,
Dazzle and chill the wretched wand'rer's soul!
Or, midst the wreck of Nature, still secure,
Gaze, where the black'ning tempest, bursting round,
Tears the young branches from the parent trunk,
And strips the forest of its loftiest pride!

And YET! so wonderfully form'd to meet
The cutting blast, the winged light'ning's glare,
The painful radiance of the scorching Sun;
To watch the midnight taper's glimm'ring flame
O'er the long studious page, or pore intent
Upon the fine-wrought mysteries that lurk

In art mechanical! to trace the stars
Through all their devious labyrinths of air;
To plunge amidst the foamings of the deep;
Or pour the copious torrents from that spring
By pity cherish'd in the human breast!
YET so alive is ev'ry wond'rous part,
In *each complete*, in all PRE-EMINENT!
So exquisitely delicate each nerve,
So subject to destruction and to pain,
That the minutest particle of dust,
Almost invisible to that it meets,
Obstructs its pow'rs, and o'er the visual ray
Rolls a huge mass of AGONIZING SHADE!
Such are the horrors, such the pangs acute,
That shroud the DARKEN'D EYE, whose mortal sense
Consign'd to one unbless'd and mournful night,
Can by ETERNAL DAY alone be cur'd!
Where the dim shade shall vanish from its beams,
And bathing in a sea of endless light,
The renovated ORB, awoke from DEATH,
Shall snatch its rays FROM IMMORTALITY!

THE
CAVERN OF WOE.

As Reason, fairest daughter of the skies,
Explor'd the vale, where mortal mis'ry lies;
Led on by Fortitude, with eye serene,
She mark'd each object of the varying scene;
In ev'ry maze of busy Life she found
Some hidden snare, some agonizing wound;
For each her hand display'd a precious balm,
Whose pow'r divine the tortur'd soul could calm;
Till midway, on a rock of dreadful height,
The Cave of cureless Woe assail'd her wond'ring sight!

On the bleak threshold, with'ring and forlorn,
Heart-wounded Melancholy sat reclin'd!
The rude blast scatter'd her dishevel'd hair;
Round her cold brow the deadly Nightshade twin'd!
Near, on a craggy point, stood wild Despair,

Whose pangs supreme all lesser mis'ries scorn!
And as the gaunt tormentor, smiling, view'd
The pensive child of Sorrow, soul-ſubdu'd;
With taunting mien, she beckon'd from below,
The fierce, relentless BANDS, of DESOLATING WOE!

First, swift as lightning up the flinty steep
IMPATIENCE flew, barefooted, out of breath;
Scorning the perils of the dreadful sweep;
Heedless of wounding THORNS, and threat'ning DEATH!
Eager to rush the foremost of the train,
She FEAR'D not danger, and she FELT not pain:
With longing eye she view'd the tow'ring height;
From PEAK to PEAK, quick climbing with delight,
She PASS'd the FATAL CAVE; then turning short,
Fell headlong from the rock, OF EV'RY FIEND THE SPORT!

Then HORROR darted forth, in wild amaze!
Her hair erect, with pois'nous HEMLOCK bound;
Her straining eye-balls flashing fires around,
While NATURE trembled at her potent gaze!
Swift to the dizzy precipice she flew,
As, aiming with impetuous force to throw

Her giant form amidst the gulph below!
When, from an ivy'd nook obscure, PALE FEAR
Peep'd forth, slow whisp'ring to her startled ear,
"Think not the pow'r of DEATH THY mis'ries will subdue!"

Then HORROR bent her blood-shot eyes below,
Where, by a group of DEMONS compass'd round,
Lay SUICIDE ACCURS'D! from many a wound
On his bare bosom, did life's fountain flow!
Now SHAME, with cheeks by burning blushes fir'd,
And skulking COWARDICE, in haste retir'd!
While CONSCIENCE plac'd beneath his fev'rish head
A pillow dire, with THORNS and NETTLES spread;
And GUILT, with all the SCORPIONS of her train,
Ope'd to his fainting eyes ETERNITY OF PAIN!

Then LUXURY approach'd on couch of down!
Drawn by her offspring, FOLLY and DISEASE,
Flush'd PLEASURE decking her with ROSEATE crown,
And bow'd OBEDIENCE, ever prone to please,
Waiting her nod! languid she seem'd, and pale,
Restless, and sated with voluptuous fare;
Beside her pillow, hung with trappings rare,

Stood trembling PALSY, ready to assail;
And writhing AGONY, and slow DECAY,
And hood-wink'd VICE abhorr'd, that shun'd the EYE OF DAY.

Next, with a solemn, slow, and feeble pace,
Came silent POVERTY, in tatter'd vest!
The frequent tears, that glisten'd on her breast,
Had fretted channels down her meagre face!
A rabble crew of IDIOTS dinn'd her ear;
While mean REPROACH came smiling in the rear.
With firm, yet modeſt look, she pass'd along;
Nor sought relief, nor mark'd the taunting throng;
While her wrung HEART, still scorning to complain,
SUPPRESS'D the rending groan, and throbb'd WITH PROUD DISDAIN.

Close at her heels, insidious ENVY CREPT;
The IMP, deform'd, and horrible in shape,
Mock'd, when the slow-consuming victim wept,
Pointing, and grinning, like a wither'd APE:
About her throat, the ASP DETRACTION clung,
Scatt'ring destructive poisons from her tongue!
She wav'd a BLASTED LAUREL o'er her head,
Stol'n from the SACRED ASHES of the DEAD;
Inly she pin'd; while in her panting breast,
Shrunk IGNORANCE ſtruck its fangs, TO BANISH GENTLE REST.

In a lone corner, almost hid in shade,
With downcast eye, sat UNREQUITED LOVE!
As from their hollow cell the slow tears stray'd,
A willow garland for his brow he wove!
Low at his feet, bare MADNESS laid his head,
Rattling his chains, upon his flinty bed!
Rous'd from his stupor, by the clanking sound,
The pensive youth gaz'd fearfully around;
And, wond'ring to behold such mis'ry near,
FORGOT his mournful WREATH, and dropp'd a PITYING TEAR.

Now, lab'ring up the flinty winding road,
Laden with treasure, bending to the ground,
Appear'd lean AVARICE! the pond'rous load
Seem'd his weak shoulders every step to wound:
One thread-bare garb hung on his aged form;
Scant covering from the bleak and win'try storm!
Before him FAMINE went, a THING DECAY'D;
And dark SUSPICION, grasping at a shade!
While FRAUD, low crawling, mock'd the reptile's art,
PILFER'D the scatter'd GOLD, AND WRUNG THE MISER'S HEART!

Next came DECEIT, with smooth and fawning tongue,
Glozing with praises every thing debas'd;
To shield her breast, a flattering mirror hung;
A TINSEL zone shone dazzling round her waist!
Her HAND, conceal'd beneath her flimsy vest,
Clasp'd a keen dagger, ready to destroy;
Content she SEEM'D, though, in her cunning breast,
Her coward soul shrunk from the touch of joy;
Her humble voice the list'ning ear beguil'd,
While, with infernal ART, SHE MURDER'D AS SHE SMIL'D.

Now, through the CAVERN rush'd, with iron hand,
OPPRESSION INSOLENT! his arm he rais'd,
Waving his spear, with absolute command,
While ev'ry subject FIEND retir'd, amaz'd!
At awful distance, trembling, prostrate round,
The sons of pining SLAV'RY kiss'd the ground;
Till darting forward, o'er the abject crowd,
With voice exulting, menacing, and loud,
INSATIATE VENGEANCE snatch'd the uprais'd lance,
While bold OPPRESSION'S ARM, FELL NERVELESS AT HIS GLANCE.

Next, PRIDE came forward, gorgeously array'd;
His brow a starry wreath of GEMS compress'd;
In his right hand a SCEPTRE he display'd;
A robe of costly ERMINE wrapp'd his breast!
Enthron'd, sublime, above the wond'ring race,
Immortal beauties seem'd to deck his face!
His eye assum'd pre-eminence of sway;
He reign'd the GILDED IDOL of the day;
Till DEATH, HIS dread supremacy to show,
Struck at the vaunting wretch, AND LAID HIS SCEPTRE LOW.

Now, rattling o'er the teeming plains afar,
Came glitt'ring WEALTH, in his resplendent car!
His rapid course swift-footed TOIL pursu'd,
With sinewy limbs, and brown sun-freckled breast:
The lord of luxury his vassal view'd,
And, smiling, lifted high his haughty crest!
But, when neglected TOIL at length retir'd,
The short-liv'd glories of his brow expir'd;
Around, his eager eyes he roll'd in vain;
INGRATITUDE appear'd, AND CLAIM'D HER TURN TO REIGN!

At her approach, the FATAL CAVERN rung:
Loud shouts of horror rent the vaulted stone!
ALL LESSER FIENDS their heads in sorrow hung;
OMNIPOTENT IN ILL, SHE grasp'd th' INFERNAL THRONE!
Then REASON mark'd her blest ASSOCIATE fly;
And shudd'ring at the SCENE, RESOUGHT HER NATIVE SKY!

SOLITUDE.

HAIL, SOLITUDE serene! thou nurse of thought!
To whom the weary mind retires, to taste
The blissful hour of exquisite repose!
Thou, who delight'st to dwell in silent woods,
Whose variegated foliage hangs its shade
O'er the rude margin of the mountain's brow;
Or, interwoven, down its sloping side,
Spreads the dim horrors of a mid-day night!

Hail, pensive SOLITUDE! whose footsteps stray
Along the pebbly borders of the main,
When from the eastern clouds the SUN darts forth,
Lifting his glorious canopy of fire
Above the pale horizon, spreading round
A living world of undulating Light!
Or seek'st the cool, and unfrequented bow'r,

The bushy dell, or the dew-spangl'd grot,
When the fierce LORD OF NOON, with flaming eye,
Rolls furious o'er the sapphire floor of heav'n;
Or downward shoots his shaft of glitt'ring fire,
Upon the sultry heath, and thirsty mead,
To drink the ling'ring tears of MORN, that shine
On the young flowret's aromatic breast:
Or, when, with humid hand, her purple robe
Meek TWILIGHT draws, across the mountain's brow,
Veiling its golden crest, in dusky shade
Of cold, oblivious gloom, thou lov'st to sit,
And watch the lamp of night, ethereal borne,
Glide o'er the cavern'd cliff, whose torrents roar
Down its stupendous sides, and foam to reach
The desolated VALLEY, lost below!

THEN wilt thou trace, with FANCY's tearful eye,
The once delicious scene; the rural cot;
The village house of pray'r; the sun-burnt HIND;
The lowly children of the rushy roof;
The flocks; the herds; and all the golden pride
Of glowing AUTUMN, whelm'd beneath the flood.

O SACRED SOLITUDE! amidst thy scenes
Of rapture infinite, thy ills are these:
The ruthless cataract; the midnight blast;
The death-wing'd tempest; and the with'ring bolt
Of Heaven-avenging wrath! Nor art THOU only,
Destin'd to endure, in solitary shades,
The sad diversity of direful woe!
The sweeping hurricane, the stormy hour,
The fateful lightnings, and the whelming flood,
Are but the emblems of disast'rous life!

Then, let me court THEE in thy gentlest form;
In lonely grottos; and in verdant glens,
Where the slow brook runs babbling from its source,
And perfum'd zephyrs fan the fervid ray!
Where MEDITATION, like an HERMIT pure,
Whose bosom, fraught with mild philanthropy,
In silence, mourns the miseries of MAN!
Creation's LORD! who, plac'd amidst the gems,
The luxuries of Nature's vaſt domain,
STILL pants for MORE; and, still impatient, grasps
The glitt'ring SHADOW of delusive joys!

For THIS, he wields the desolating SWORD;
Quits the dear mansion of domestic peace;
The lov'd companions of his native home;
The social comforts, and the calm delights,
That thronging round the blazing hearth, beguile
The tardy winter's night: for THIS he dares
The pois'nous vapours of infected climes,
The torrid ray, or the pernicious blasts
Of petrifying LAPLAND's chearless skies!
For THIS he wanders far, o'er unknown seas,
To tame the tribes barbarian, or explore
The sad variety of human woes.
Oh! blind, misguided, and mistaken MAN!
To leave the GARDEN of luxurious sweets,
And wander 'midst a DESART, fraught with thorns.

Ah! let me, in some shelter'd VALLEY, own
A COTTAGE, lowly, but secure from harm;
From the rude rioter, or caitiff wretch,
Who, prowling by the twinkling starry light,
Assails the houseless traveller, and bares
Against his beating breast, the murd'rous knife.

From such as THESE, secure, let sweet repose
Strew on my pillow rude, the buds of SPRING,
The opening treasures of the infant year!
There, let oblivious slumbers lull my mind,
And harmonize the quickly throbbing pulse,
That, through the creeping hour of day, endur'd
The various thrills of extacy and woe.
And you, ye airy phantoms of the brain,
Ye forms fantastical, or fraught with fear,
Oh! fly the blest abode of gentle peace;
Nor with your agonizing spells assail
The weary senses, wrapp'd in balmy sleep!
And when the LARK, the harbinger of DAY,
Sweeps the blue ether, with exulting wing,
And welcomes her approach with shrilly song,
With THEE, I'll quaff the ever-winding rill,
And feast upon the luxuries that rise
From the warm bosom of the teeming earth!
While HEALTH, the blooming handmaid of REPOSE,
Shall smile upon my board, and give a zest
To the rich banquet of content and joy.
There the faint WANDERER shall be my guest,
With modest mien, and converse undefil'd;

Unvarnish'd emblems of the spotless soul!
And there, the legendary TALE shall claim
The midnight hour serene; while the pale lamp
Shall feebly gleam upon the frugal board:
Yet, not to these confin'd; the loftier theme,
The wing'd idea, and the soothing strain
Of Heaven-descended song, shall charm the soul,
And give to ev'ry nerve a keener sense!
There, shall the hoary sage, PHILOSOPHY,
Unfold his sacred lore; while WISDOM's son
Shall, smiling, chase the rigid brow austere,
And mingle in the scene of humbler bliss!

OH! SWEET RETIREMENT! if thy magic pow'rs
Be such as THESE! thrice welcome to my soul,
Enchanting guest! sublimest source of joy;
For THEE, I'll quit the mercenary crew,
Their cunning, and their crimes; and all the train
Of dire calamities, that dash the SOUL
On the wild ocean of tempestuous life,
The sport of warring passions, and the slave
Of fell AMBITION, AVARICE, and CARE!

Yet such are the mysterious ways of HEAV'N,
That VIRTUE oft endures the poison'd shaft;
And, by a painful THORNY road, the JUST
Pursue their course TO IMMORTALITY!

In the deep gloom of a sequester'd wood,
Far from the splendid sorrows of a Court,
The venerable ELMOUR pass'd his days.
A valiant knight he was; and could the boast
Of noble ancestry add fame to worth,
All must have own'd his claims pre-eminent.
Disgusted with the treach'ry of mankind,
Grown old, and feeble, in the field of war,
He clos'd his race of honour, as the SUN
Amidst resplendent glory sinks to rest!
One hopeful BOY, the solace of his soul,
The ONLY scion of the noblest tree
That decorated Nature's wide domain,
Bless'd his declining hours, enlivening age
With manhood's dawning grace! so the clear MOON,
Snatching its lustre from its PARENT ORB,
With temper'd radiance gleams on ALPINE SNOWS!

Oft, when the wint'ry hour pass'd slowly on,
Of martial feats the hardy VET'RAN spoke;
Of bold achievements; dang'rous enterprize;
Illustrious deeds; and MEN, whose eagle eyes
Met the wing'd lance of death in fierce exploit!
The gallant YOUTH would listen to his SIRE;
And oft the tear, that pity bade to flow,
Was quench'd by emulation's glowing fire,
That rush'd in crimson lustre o'er his cheek!
The tale was oft repeated; still he found
The repetition grateful to his soul!
And when he spoke of FEUDS that shook the land;
Of WARRIORS, bleeding for their COUNTRY's weal;
Of sturdy HINDS whose bosoms soar'd sublime,
On heav'n-born LIBERTY's immortal wing;
The growing rapture glisten'd in his eye,
Till every fibre throbb'd with proud applause!

The youthful EDMUND oft, at early dawn,
Ere TWILIGHT, with her dewy hand, unlock'd
The golden portal of the rosy East,
Would climb the mountain's fire-encircled crest;

And gazing o'er the bright extent of space,
Behold, half pleas'd, his cot, his native vale,
His dewy meads, and dark embow'ring woods,
Where Solitude, in awful splendour, reign'd!
" Was MAN ordain'd," the pensive youth would say,
" To pour upon the wand'ring rill, or watch
" The dull succession of days, months, and years,
" In base inglorious ease? Why does he feel
" The burning ardour riot in his veins,
" But that superior bliss awaits the brave,
" And the rapt mind, by inspiration wak'd,
" Points the bland path of glory to his view?"

Enamour'd of the thought, awhile he paus'd;
While REASON, dawning on his glowing heart,
Brought to his view the many wounding woes,
That cross the trav'ler in his toilsome road;
Then Mem'ry pictur'd all his FATHER's worth;
The many scars that dignified his breast;
His feeble age; his unrewarded toils!
The warm affection, the paternal zeal,
So long, so fondly, and so nobly prov'd,

Rush'd o'er his thought! while, down his blushing cheek,
The graceful tear of filial virtue stole!

One fatal morn, when SUMMER's gaudy hand
Had dress'd the LANDSCAPE in its richest garb,
The YOUTH forsook his COT! the winding path
With trembling feet he press'd; and oft he turn'd,
To ponder on the scene of pleasure past;
And when he view'd his FATHER's lowly roof,
From the bleak summit of a neighb'ring rock,
A thousand conflicts struggling in his breast
Awoke each wounded nerve, to pangs unknown,
Unfelt before;—now felt TOO LATE FOR CURE!
The SUN rose high; the hills and vallies smil'd;
The humid foliage, the pellucid streams,
The op'ning flow'rs, the woodland melodies,
All seem'd to welcome the resplendent hour!
SIR ELMOUR sought the treasure of his soul,
But found him not! he call'd, alas! in vain:
No voice, responsive, answer'd to his sighs,
Such as was wont to gladden morn's approach,
And bid ARCADIA flourish in the wild!

Madd'ning with anguish, fearing to enquire,
Yet frantic to be told, he wander'd forth
O'er hill and dale; through the long forest drear,
The tangled labyrinth, and weedy waste;
"OH! MY LOST SON!" the gallant ELMOUR cried,
"Yet stay awhile to close thy father's eyes,
"And bathe his ashes with a kindred tear!"

Now to th' embattled plains he bent his way,
Where the contending ROSES, RED AND WHITE,
Had scatter'd thorns upon a bleeding land;
For well he knew the ardour of his SON,
And hop'd, amidst the laurels of renown,
To trace his steps, or perish in the search.
There is a SYMPATHY in VALIANT MINDS,
That, as the MAGNET draws with unknown pow'r
Still turning to the same unvaried point,
ATTRACTS, by proud SIMILITUDE OF WORTH!
Scarce had he reach'd the desolating scene,
When, from a BOWMAN's fateful quiver drawn,
A death-wing'd ARROW pierc'd his DAUNTLESS BREAST!
He fell sublime! as the tall forest OAK,

By lightning shiver'd, smites the yielding ground,
And hides, with BEAUTEOUS BRANCHES, Nature's wreck!
"Now EDMUND, brave!" he cried, "MY GLORIOUS SON,
"Where'er thou art, a FATHER's blessing's THINE!"

Forth from the ranks, attracted by the sound,
Wild with despair, ill-fated EDMUND rush'd,
And, such was the mysterious will of Heav'n,
Drew his OWN ARROW, blushing with THE SOURCE
That fed the VITAL FOUNTAIN of HIS HEART.

Awhile subdu'd, the frenzied hero stood,
Like a proud CEDAR, blasted by the storm!
Then, rushing to the arms of blood-stain'd WAR,
Embrac'd his father's spirit in her breast!

ONE SOD contain'd their ashes, moist with tears;
While VIRTUE scatter'd round IMMORTAL WREATHS,
And WEPT, to see THE HAVOCK SHE HAD MADE!

Ah! who can tell the various pangs that wait
On SPLENDID MISERY? the hidden woes,

That thronging round the canopy of gold,
Pernicious, moth-like, feed upon the wretch
Who groans beneath the PAGEANTRY OF STATE!
Who can describe the agonizing throbs,
The thirsty fevers, or the languid hours,
That sated LUXURY is doom'd to own?
Who can avert the strongly-poison'd shaft
Of ENVY, glancing from the recreant soul?
Or who can bear the slow-consuming touch
Of unrequited LOVE? the subtle smile
Of insolent DISDAIN; or the fell grasp
Of keen INGRATITUDE, "the child of Hell!"
Or who, but those, the WORST of human kind,
Who batten on the miseries of MAN,
Would, robbing Nature of her ample means,
Crouch the base knee, or prompt the fawning tongue
To gain applause from IGNORANCE and PRIDE?
WHO, that is blest with INTELLECT refin'd!
With sense, to know the dignity of WORTH,
The vast supremacy of innate TRUTH!
The majesty of MIND! the sacred glow
That warms the SON OF GENIUS, and expands

The pure ethereal essence of the SOUL,
Would, like an EAGLE, pouncing on a WORM,
Barter the proudest attributes of GOD,
For the base joys of SUBLUNARY POW'R?

THEN, WELCOME SOLITUDE! The sphere is THINE,
That gives the purest passions ample scope!
That bids the soul beam with exterior grace
Of light, reflected from the source within!
And when its essence shall evaporate,
Fann'd by the desolating wing of TIME;
When this dull scene of transitory life,
And all its SORROWS, all its JOYS are o'er;
ONE sparkling ATOM, from its prison clay,
Shall soar, TO MINGLE WITH ITS NATIVE HEAV'N!

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM 9 NO 76